These Two Russian 'Fake News' Outfits Get Billions Of Hits On Facebook

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Presidential candidate Mark Zuckerberg, er um, rewind: Facebook CEO and Forbes billionaire Mark Zuckerberg released a sober video Thursday regarding "fake news," promising to hand over 3,000 Russian ads to congress. The goal: to see if those ads convinced hapless Americans to pull the lever for Trump instead of Hillary. Facebook has already handed over copies of the ads and information about their creators to Special Counsel Robert Mueller, still knee-deep in his Russia investigation. Zuck said he plans to "fight election interference."

Facebook did not respond to immediate comment about what those ads were.

For sure, the Russians are all over Facebook.

According to California-based social media research firm Tubular, Russian viral video makers have a lock on Facebook content creators. But what they are dominating at has nothing to do with politics. In August alone, two Russian-based content makers scored a total of 2.6 billion hits. That puts the Russians in the top five spots for Facebook content creators worldwide, beating out every American company. Only the Brits at Jungle Creations, LAD Bible and Unilad have the Russians beat on a global scale.

So just what are those Trump loving, Hillary hating Russians promoting ad nauseam on Facebook to fool Americans into voting the way Vladimir Putin wants?

Here's one. It was the No. 1 U.S. Facebook content maker all summer long, according to Tubular. What you are about to see below is pure propaganda ... for do-it-yourself ideologues.

5-Minute Crafts and Bright Side both receive over 1.3 billion hits a month, and are the top two viral video makers viewed on FB here in the U.S.

Both brands are part of The Soul Publishing Group, one of the biggest content creators in the world, developed by Pavel Radaev and Marat Mukhametov. Radaev is also the lead developer and CEO behind AdMe, a 12 year old Russian social media content provider. Mukhametov is his co-developing partner on both ventures and is based in Russia.

Democrats and Never Trump Republicans continue to push the story that Russians created fake news stories, put it on American social media, and manipulated voters to chose Trump over Hillary. Even the recent sanctions bill made references to punishing Russian for meddling in the election, essentially calling into question the validity of the very President who signed the veto-proof bill into law this summer.

After the election, Business Insider did their homework on some of the top election-related fake news stories that went viral on Facebook. The report, written by Hannah Roberts, ran on Nov. 17, roughly two weeks after that faithful day that put Putin's preferred candidate won the White House.

Of the top 10 fake news stories, only six were election related stories. Of the six covered by Roberts, just one was anti-Trump. That one was about famous drag queen RuPaul saying Trump made appropriate gestures, as in grabbing him in the rear end. That news item was published by World News Daily Report. They are total fake news. And they admit it. This is the disclaimer at the bottom of their website: World News Daily Report assumes all responsibility for the satirical nature of its articles and for the fictional nature of their content. Maybe it was added after the election.

One of the most viral news items was produced by ETF News, which stands for Ending the Fed, not Exchange Traded Funds. This news item stated the Pope had endorsed Trump.

Another famous one touted Trump beating Hillary in the popular vote as well as in the electoral college. That one was produced by a blogging company called 70News.

It might be easier just to run an ad on Facebook, by Facebook itself, telling news consumers that these websites publish unreliable news, at best. And that they should stick to known publishers and media broadcasters instead.

It is impossible to discover who is behind these publishers, because ownership and contact information is not available on their websites. Could they be Russians? Maybe.

But all told, the top six really fake news items about Trump and Hillary equals to less than four million viewers over the course of months. Russian-made viral videos attract 100 times that. Moreover, if Russians were behind such fake news items, a look at what those companies publish, and for how long, would give a better idea of their motives. ETF News isn't operational anymore. Their last news story on their website is dated January 6, 2017, two weeks before Inauguration Day. The first article was published in March 2016. It was clearly set up as a means to push pro-Trump news through social media channels.

70News is still up and at 'em. Their top stories Thursday were derogatory articles about activists from the Black Lives Matter movement.

Facebook fake news providers World News Daily is publishing. But there are no pro-Trump headlines to be found. Thursday's lead was about an obese man getting locked in a Krogers grocery store and eating $8,000 worth of food.

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